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INTRA-ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: JAPAN
(SECOND OF FOUR-PART SERIES)

AMINCR:

THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICIES OF THE COUNTRIES OF ASIA WERE EXAMINED IN DETAIL RECENTLY (MARCH 20) AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN STUDIES, HELD THIS YEAR IN THE CANADIAN CITY OF TORONTO. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN WAS THERE, AND IN THIS THE SECOND OF FOUR REPORTS LOOKS AT THE VIEWS OF ONE AMERICAN SCHOLAR ON THE FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES OF JAPAN.

VOICE:

THE SCHOLAR IS DONALD HELLMANN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON. PROFESSOR HELLMANN BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT ONE CANNOT FACE JAPANESE POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS WITHOUT PLACING THEM INTO SOME INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE POLITICAL PROCESSES IN JAPAN. THIS, HE SAYS, IS PARTICULARLY TRUE TODAY, WHEN JAPANESE POLICIES ARE UNDERGOING FUNDAMENTAL REVISION.

JAPAN, PROFESSOR HELLMANN NOTES, WHILE BOTH A GLOBAL AND REGIONAL POWER, CONTINUES TO PLAY A CENTRAL BUT PASSIVE ROLE IN ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. BUT, IN HIS WORDS: "THE DRASTIC AND UNANTICIPATED EVENTS THAT HAVE ALTERED AND COMPLICATED THE INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS HAVE HAD A POTENT IMPACT IN TOKYO." DURING THESE YEARS, HE SAYS, CHANGES IN JAPANESE FOREIGN RELATIONS HAVE TO A LARGE EXTENT INVOLVED THE

GREAT POWERS....THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, AND THE SOVIET UNION. JAPANESE ATTENTION, HE ADDS, HAS ALSO BEEN FOCUSED ON NEW PROBLEMS IN A MULTI-POLAR WORLD....THE BREAKDOWN IN THE BRETTON-WOODS AGREEMENT, THE DESTABILIZING EFFECTS OF THE OIL CRISIS, AND THE LIKE. AND THESE DEVELOPMENTS, HE SAYS, HAVE TO A LARGE DEGREE LED TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICIES FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE AND AWAY FROM A DIRECT CONCERN FOR JAPAN'S DIRECT ROLE IN ASIA.

STILL, PROFESSOR HELLMANN SAYS, JAPAN IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN PULLED MORE DEEPLY INTO EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE WORLD WAR TWO. JAPAN'S TRADE PATTERNS SINCE 1970, HE OBSERVES, ARE PARTICULARLY DRAMATIC IN UNDERSCORING TOKYO'S ASIAN ORIENTATION AND ITS MOUNTING DEPENDENCE ON MORE POLITICALLY VOLATILE AND UNPREDICTABLE ASIAN NATIONS. JAPAN, HE NOTES, NOW DOES NINETY PERCENT AS MUCH TRADE WITH TWO ASIAN COUNTRIES -- SOUTH KOREA AND TAIWAN -- AND THE BRITISH COLONY OF HONG KONG AS IT DOES WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. HE ALSO NOTES THAT IN 1958, OF THE NINE MAJOR COUNTRIES TRADING IN ASIA, OF WHICH JAPAN WAS ONE, THE JAPANESE ACCOUNTED FOR ONLY NINE PERCENT OF THEIR TOTAL TRADE. IN FACT, HE ADDS, EXCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, JAPAN TODAY DOES AS MUCH TRADE IN ASIA AS DO THE OTHER SEVEN MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS COMBINED.

PROFESSOR HELLMANN SAYS THAT JAPAN'S TRADE DOMINANCE IN EAST ASIA -- REINFORCED BY PATTERNS OF AID AND INVESTMENTS -- PUTS IT IN A POSITION WHERE IT MUST CONFRONT THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE REGION AS WELL. TO THIS, HE SAYS, MUST BE ADDED

THE FACT THAT JAPAN HAS INCREASED ITS POLITICAL TIES IN THE AREA, NOTABLY IN ITS RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND JAPANESE SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. POSITION IN SOUTH KOREA. IN THE CASE OF SOUTH KOREA, HE BELIEVES THAT JAPAN HAS MOVED TO A THRESHOLD OF INVOLVEMENT FROM WHICH IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO EXTRICATE ITSELF SHOULD PROBLEMS DEVELOP.

JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, PROFESSOR HELLMANN SAYS, IS FAR LESS DRAMATIC THAN IN EAST ASIA. BUT IN HIS VIEW, THE PROBLEMS WHICH PRIME MINISTER TANAKA ENCOUNTERED IN INDONESIA AND THAILAND IN 1974, WHERE JAPAN'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY WAS CALLED INTO QUESTION, HAVE FORCED THE JAPANESE TO REVIEW IN A FUNDAMENTAL WAY THEIR CAPACITY TO FUNCTION AS A TRADING COMPANY IN THE AREA, IGNORING THE ESSENTIAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS THESE COUNTRIES CONFRONT.

PROFESSOR HELLMANN OBSERVES THAT AS WE MOVE TO A MORE PLURALIST WORLD, SECURITY WILL INCREASINGLY BE DEFINED IN REGIONAL, NOT GLOBAL, TERMS. THE RANGE OF CHOICE REGARDING SECURITY BY MOST COUNTRIES -- PARTICULARLY IN ASIA, HE SAYS, WILL BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. AND AT THE SAME TIME, THE SMALL POWERS IN ASIA WILL HAVE INCREASING CAPACITIES TO ACT INDEPENDENT OF SUPERPOWERS AND GREAT POWERS IN THE REGION.

THESE FACTORS IN ASIA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR HELLMANN, COULD PLAY IMPORTANTLY ON JAPANESE POLICIES IN THE FUTURE. JAPAN, HE SAYS, WILL BE FACED WITH

INCREASING DILEMMAS SIMPLY BECAUSE ALL THE GREAT POWERS IN ASIA -- EXCEPT JAPAN -- ACCEPT THE NEED FOR THE THREAT OF FORCE TO BRING ORDER. AND, HE CONCLUDES, IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR JAPAN, AS THE DOMINANT ECONOMIC FORCE IN ASIA, TO REMAIN OPERATING UNDER A SET OF RULES WHICH CREATE PROBLEMS FOR THE NATIONS INVOLVED AS WELL AS BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE OTHER GREAT POWERS.

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